

*Morality in Government*

submit that you have gone much more fully into this question and I believe that Mr. Speaker Michener's ruling and yours today would tend to supersede rather than support the conclusion which was arrived at on March 21, 1950.

**Mr. Knowles:** Mr. Speaker, I take it that what is now before us is the contention by the Minister of National Health and Welfare, supported by some of his colleagues, that the amendment as moved by the member for Royal somehow contravenes the ruling which you gave earlier this afternoon. I submit that such is not the case and I ask the house to recall the general terms of the ruling which Your Honour gave. Your ruling was that a matter before a commission of inquiry was not beyond the right of this house to discuss. You based your ruling on a study of the authorities and in particular on the judgment of Mr. Speaker Michener. I believe it is quite clear that your general position was that we have the right to discuss certain matters even though they may be under discussion in another place.

● (5:00 p.m.)

Then, sir, you asked the house to have regard to a very narrow point. I believe you used the word "narrow". This point was to be found in Mr. Speaker Macdonald's ruling of 1960. As I understood it, the narrow point you were making was that we should not in this place be trying the evidence being given in another place.

**An hon. Member:** He said "refer".

**Mr. Knowles:** My friends over there quote what Mr. Speaker Macdonald said. I am trying to interpret what the present occupant of the chair said. As I understood Your Honour, your view was that it would be improper for us to be trying bits of evidence here at the same time those bits of evidence are being tried somewhere else. You did not rule out discussion of matters just because they are being discussed in that other place.

I suggest what the hon. member for Royal has brought before this house is not the question of whether evidence being given in another place is to be examined there or not. What the hon. member for Royal has brought before this house has been a practice, an action, concerning which there is now knowledge in the public domain. It is not only a matter of discussion before the inquiry, it is fully reported in the press. It has not been denied by the ministers opposite. There is no

[Mr. Churchill.]

suggestion that the statement that the government asked the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to provide information is incorrect.

What we are asking, what the hon. member for Royal has asked be discussed is a practice. This is something quite different from trying or assessing the evidence in the way that was dealt with in Mr. Speaker Macdonald's ruling of 1950. I say again, Mr. Speaker, that I think your general ruling was clear and I think it was correct, that this house has certain rights that cannot be abrogated by the reference of a matter to a royal commission. You merely asked that within that general rule we have regard to what Mr. Speaker Macdonald said and that we not try bits of evidence here while they are being tried in another place.

I submit that this amendment does not do that in any sense at all. This amendment deals with a practice on the part of the government, knowledge of which is now part of the public domain. We have a right to discuss that matter in this house. In the light of your own ruling given earlier this afternoon, the amendment moved by the hon. member for Royal is in order.

**Mr. Fulton:** Mr. Speaker, I add my support to what the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has just said and what has been said by my own colleagues previously. Following on from where the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre left off and along the same general lines, I say that the ruling of Mr. Speaker Macdonald was on a narrow point. What he said was that reference should not be made to the proceedings, evidence or findings of a royal commission. It is clear that what he had in mind by his use of those words in that juxtaposition was matters which were in effect the *res gestae* before the royal commission.

It is true that as a result of evidence given we now know there was a certain course followed by the government. However, this is not a matter before the royal commission; it is entirely a collateral matter. It is in keeping with Mr. Speaker Macdonald's ruling and certainly in keeping with what Your Honour had said—you have said here earlier that parliament is not to be precluded from discussing a matter simply because it is before a commission of inquiry—that parliament certainly should not be precluded from discussing a collateral matter having no relationship to the real matter before the commission, simply because that collateral matter may have been referred to down there.